

# Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services

## Program Area Summary

### Overview

Fairfax County reached a major milestone in 2003 when its population topped the one million mark. Working to meet the needs of such a rapidly growing and extremely diverse population is a highly challenging proposition. At last count, approximately 150 different languages are spoken by County residents, of whom more than 30 percent speak a language other than English at home. Meeting those needs in a cost-effective manner poses an even greater challenge. The 14 agencies that comprise this program area are responsible for a variety of functions to ensure that County services are provided efficiently and effectively. Recognition by various organizations such as the National Association of Counties (NACo), the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and others validate the County's efforts in these areas. In 2003, over 60 awards and other forms of recognition were accorded to County agencies and employees, confirming that Fairfax County continues to be one of the best managed municipal governments in the country. In fact, Fairfax County was rated as the Best Managed County in the Government Performance Project's grading of 40 large counties in 2002. County officials continue to be acknowledged for their expertise and leadership beyond the boundaries of Fairfax County. In 2003, the County Attorney was elected President of the Virginia State Bar. Recently, the County's Chief Information Officer and the Director of the Department of Information Technology were recognized by Governing magazine as "Public Officials of the Year" for their leadership in the County's innovative use of modern information technologies to improve citizen access to government information and services.

Managing in a resource-constrained environment requires a significant leadership commitment – from the elected Board of Supervisors to the County Executive and individual agencies. Fairfax County is committed to remaining a high performance organization. Despite significant budget reductions in recent years, or perhaps in part due to them, staff continually seeks ways to streamline processes and maximize technology in order to provide a high level of service with limited resources. Since FY 1991, the County's population has increased 26.5 percent; however, authorized staffing has increased only 1.4 percent despite the addition or expansion of 152 facilities including police and fire stations, libraries, and School Age Child Care (SACC) Centers, among others. This was made possible largely by the elimination of many administrative/professional/management positions including 51 in this program area alone from FY 2002 to FY 2005.

### Strategic Direction

As part of the countywide focus on developing strategic plans during 2002-2003, the agencies in this program area developed mission, vision and values statements; performed environmental scans; and defined strategies for achieving their missions. These strategic plans are linked to the overall County Core Purpose and Vision Elements. Common themes among the agencies in the Legislative-Executive/Central Services program area include:

- Development and alignment of leadership and performance
- Accessibility to information and programs
- Strong customer service
- Effective use of resources
- Streamlined processes
- Innovative use of technology
- Partnerships and community involvement

#### COUNTY CORE PURPOSE

*To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:*

- Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities
- Building Livable Spaces
- Practicing Environmental Stewardship
- Connecting People and Places
- Creating a Culture of Engagement
- Maintaining Healthy Economies
- Exercising Corporate Stewardship

This program area differs from most of the others because the majority of the Legislative-Executive/Central Services agencies are focused on internal service functions that enable other direct service providers to perform their jobs effectively. Overall leadership emanates from the Board of Supervisors and is articulated countywide by the County Executive who also assumes responsibility for coordination of initiatives that cut across agency lines. In addition, the County Executive oversees the County's leadership development efforts, particularly the High Performance Organization (HPO) model used in Fairfax County's LEAD Program (Leading, Educating and Developing). Agencies in this program area also provide human resources, financial, purchasing, legal, budget and information technology support; records management; and mail services.

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### Linkage to County Vision Elements

While this program area supports all seven of the County Vision Elements, the following are emphasized:

- Corporate Stewardship
- Creating a Culture of Engagement
- Connecting People and Places
- Practicing Environmental Stewardship

By the nature of this program area, **Corporate Stewardship** is the vision element most commonly referenced by these agencies. Efforts focus on the most efficient use of resources including initiatives such as piloting an electronic pay advice program in order to save money and time; establishing and maintaining national contracts under the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance to enjoy the benefits of a large procurement pool; converting the Weekly Agenda to an online publication in order to save printing and mailing costs; and using an electronic payment system in order to reduce costs associated with the payment of County obligations. Information technology is also leveraged extensively to address both internal and external needs. Overall, agencies in this program area ensure that taxes are assessed and collected fairly, and that revenue is spent in accordance with the elected Board's direction. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to reduce red tape in areas such as procurement, human resources and budgeting in order to provide agencies the necessary flexibility to operate with fewer resources. The need to ensure accountability places an oversight responsibility on agencies such as the Departments of Finance, Purchasing and Supply Management, Human Resources, and Management and Budget.

The second most commonly cited Vision Element for this program area is **Creating a Culture of Engagement**. Fairfax County places priority on ensuring access and participation by residents and the business community in their local government. With a highly computer-literate community; approximately 79 percent of whom have home computers with Internet access, agencies in this program area continue to employ a variety of means to engage residents. Examples include providing residents the opportunity to use the Internet to sign up to testify at public hearings before the Board of Supervisors; expanding the capacity to pay for County services using a credit card on the Internet; and enhancing online vendor registration and contract registration. The Office of the County Executive coordinates a number of programs designed to partner with the public to address various issues. One example is the Strengthening Neighborhoods and Building Community Initiative that cuts across a number of agencies and requires considerable public input and effort if the County is to ensure the sustainability of neighborhoods identified as needing support. In addition, the Department of Management and Budget initiated and conducts the Youth Leadership Program, a year-long program designed to teach high school students about their local government as well as how they can become active participants. This program was recognized with a National Association of Counties' Achievement Award in 2003. The Electoral Board and General Registrar use volunteers extensively including high school students and those fluent in Spanish to assist at polls on Election Day, as well as senior citizens to register voters at senior centers.

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Efforts to promote the **Connecting People and Places** vision element also include expanding information available online such as real estate assessment information, numerous County publications including the annual budget and capital improvement program, and other information such as candidate financial reports and other election-related data, among many other types.

While at first glance, **Practicing Environmental Stewardship** may not seem to be a major function of this program area, several agencies play critical roles in advancing the County's protection of the environment. The County Executive's Office assumes overall leadership in this area and coordinates the cross-agency Environmental Coordinating Committee, which focuses on air quality, watershed protection, recycling and timely response to emerging threats such as the West Nile virus. The County Executive also actively promotes the County's Telework Program in conjunction with the Department of Human Resources. The County's goal is to have 20 percent of the eligible workforce teleworking by 2005, which will contribute to decreased traffic and emissions. Another countywide priority coordinated by this program area is the Department of Purchasing and Supply Management's initiative to develop an environmentally responsible ("green") purchasing strategy and educational model to assist customer agencies in identifying and using sustainable sources for products such as carpets and janitorial supplies. Finally, the Office of the County Attorney becomes involved in situations where other County agencies have identified environmental violations that require civil remedy.

### Program Area Summary by Character

Category	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2004 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years					
Regular	952/ 952	945/ 945	949/ 949	949/ 949	948/ 947.5
Exempt	90/ 90	90/ 90	90/ 90	90/ 90	90/ 90
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$58,879,355	\$63,677,646	\$63,668,171	\$66,784,446	\$66,647,348
Operating Expenses	30,220,799	30,834,150	37,439,350	32,180,676	31,487,577
Capital Equipment	241,483	40,000	105,984	1,046,556	1,046,556
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$89,341,637</b>	<b>\$94,551,796</b>	<b>\$101,213,505</b>	<b>\$100,011,678</b>	<b>\$99,181,481</b>
Less:					
Recovered Costs	(\$9,869,601)	(\$10,290,691)	(\$11,043,675)	(\$10,301,361)	(\$10,301,361)
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$79,472,036</b>	<b>\$84,261,105</b>	<b>\$90,169,830</b>	<b>\$89,710,317</b>	<b>\$88,880,120</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$3,097,354</b>	<b>\$2,870,302</b>	<b>\$4,321,148</b>	<b>\$3,225,045</b>	<b>\$3,225,045</b>
<b>Net Cost to the County</b>	<b>\$76,374,682</b>	<b>\$81,390,803</b>	<b>\$85,848,682</b>	<b>\$86,485,272</b>	<b>\$85,655,075</b>

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### Program Area Summary by Agency

Category	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2004 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan
Board of Supervisors	\$3,776,650	\$4,163,377	\$4,163,377	\$4,306,847	\$4,291,548
Office of the County Executive	6,117,276	6,460,551	6,833,140	6,855,403	6,797,901
Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection	1,633,309	1,694,791	1,695,992	2,049,437	2,049,437
Department of Finance	6,943,837	6,986,466	7,166,392	7,547,813	7,667,813
Department of Human Resources	5,682,160	5,935,755	6,581,638	6,154,745	6,011,310
Department of Purchasing and Supply Management	3,919,739	4,020,791	4,020,791	4,194,643	4,194,643
Office of Public Affairs	971,088	1,007,608	1,096,827	1,108,050	1,089,138
Electoral Board and General Registrar	1,908,622	2,025,095	4,856,897	3,020,872	3,020,872
Office of the County Attorney	5,277,224	5,334,420	5,700,473	5,526,887	5,526,887
Department of Management and Budget	2,547,238	2,874,622	2,976,920	2,967,850	2,941,827
Office of the Financial and Program Auditor	172,237	193,910	196,310	201,893	201,893
Civil Service Commission	208,073	201,005	201,005	207,202	207,202
Department of Tax Administration	19,497,030	19,927,421	20,182,847	21,274,952	21,243,796
Department of Information Technology	20,817,553	23,435,293	24,497,221	24,293,723	23,635,853
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$79,472,036</b>	<b>\$84,261,105</b>	<b>\$90,169,830</b>	<b>\$89,710,317</b>	<b>\$88,880,120</b>

### Budget Trends

For FY 2005, the recommended funding level of \$88,880,120 for the Legislative-Executive/Central Services program area comprises 8.9 percent of the total recommended General Fund direct expenditures of \$1,003,824,621. It also includes 1,038 or 9.0 percent of total authorized positions for FY 2005.

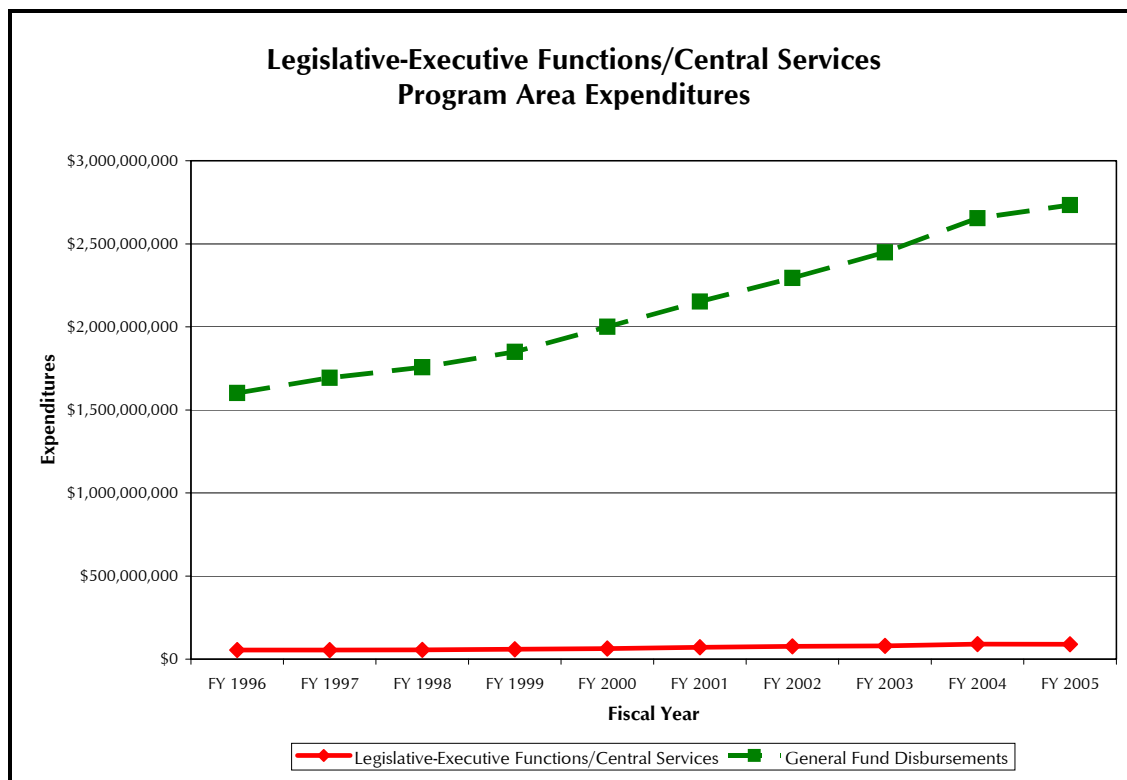
During the period FY 2003-FY 2005, the real estate tax rate was reduced from \$1.23 to \$1.13 per \$100 assessed value. As a result, reductions from anticipated spending levels were made in many County agencies to offset the loss in projected revenue. In most County agencies, expenditures have still increased during this period to account for ongoing operational requirements; however, overall General Fund direct expenditures have been reduced by \$63,721,248 and overall County disbursements have been reduced by \$113,513,736 as a result of the real estate tax rate reductions.

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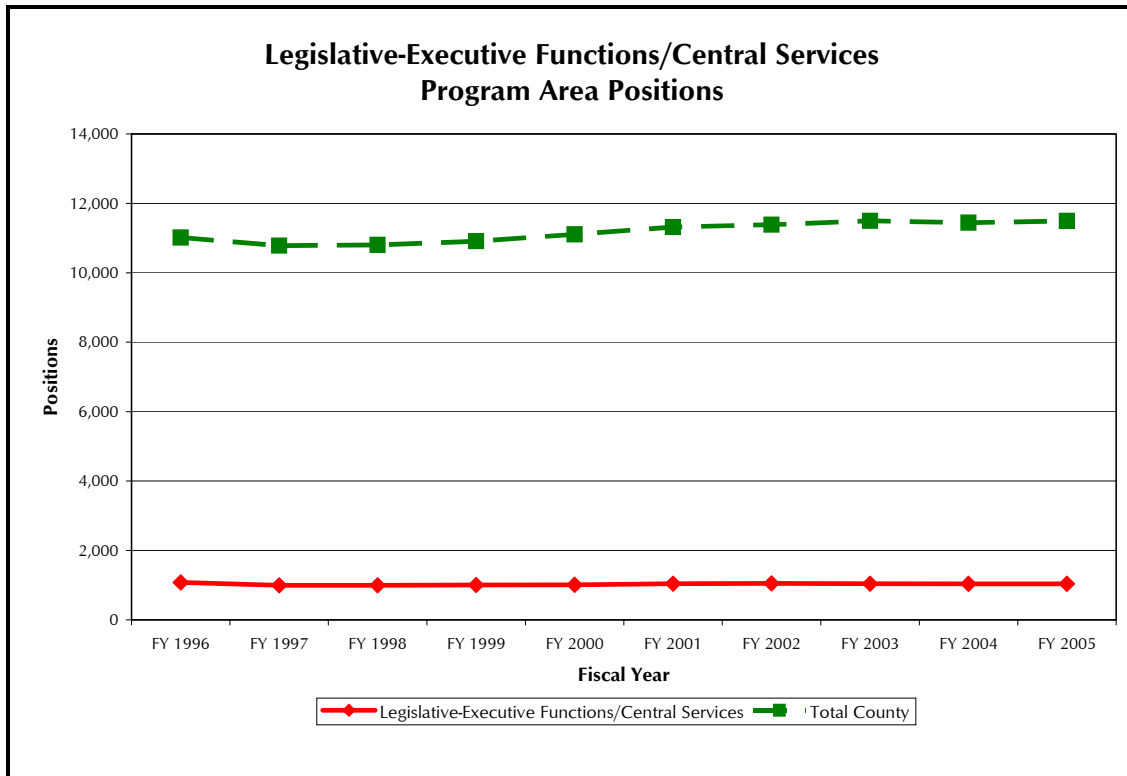
This program area has experienced budget reductions totaling \$13,315,111 or 20.9 percent of General Fund direct expenditure reductions to date, with a total of 51 positions abolished as part of those reductions. This represents 29.7 percent of General Fund positions eliminated to date, indicating a disproportionate effect on this program area as the objective for the past four years has been to reduce administrative positions in order to maintain direct service functions such as public safety and provide additional funding for education. After four years of significant reductions, there is little remaining flexibility in this program area.

The charts on the following page illustrate funding and position trends for the agencies in this program area compared to countywide expenditure and position trends. Due to the large number of agencies in the Legislative-Executive/Central Services program area, an aggregate is shown because a line graph with each shown separately is too difficult to read. In other program areas with fewer agencies, it was possible to show each agency's trends with a separate line.

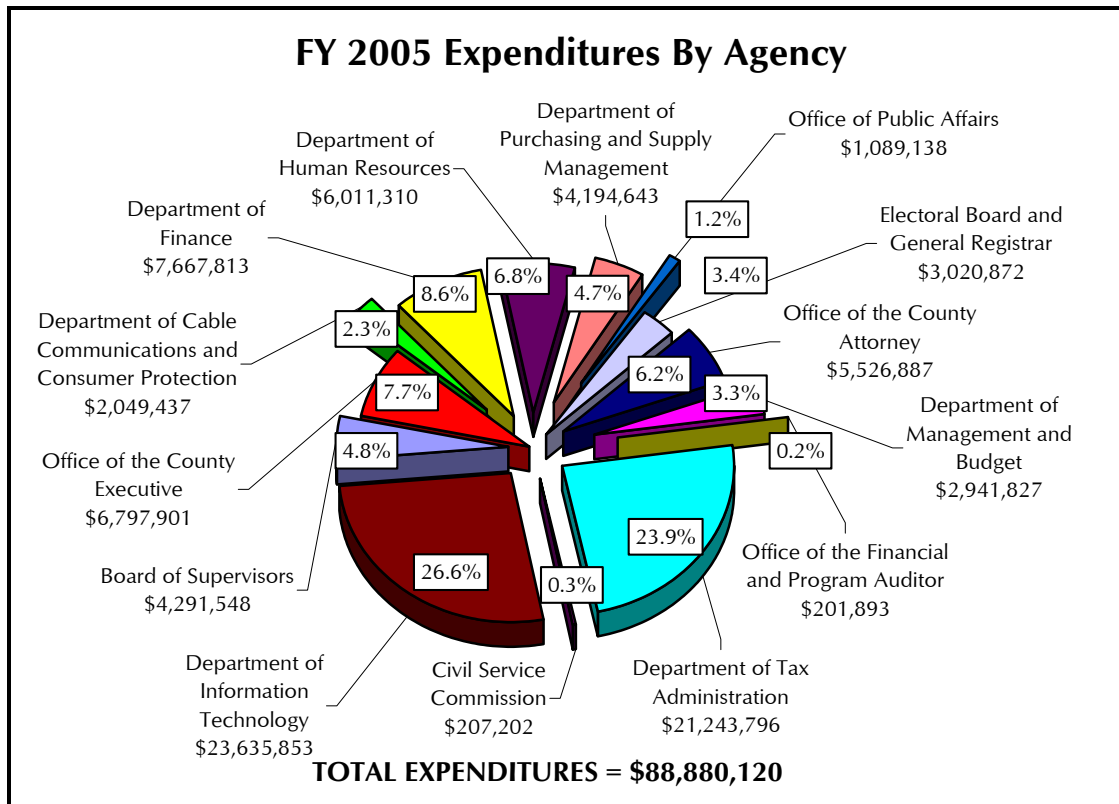
### Trends in Expenditures and Positions



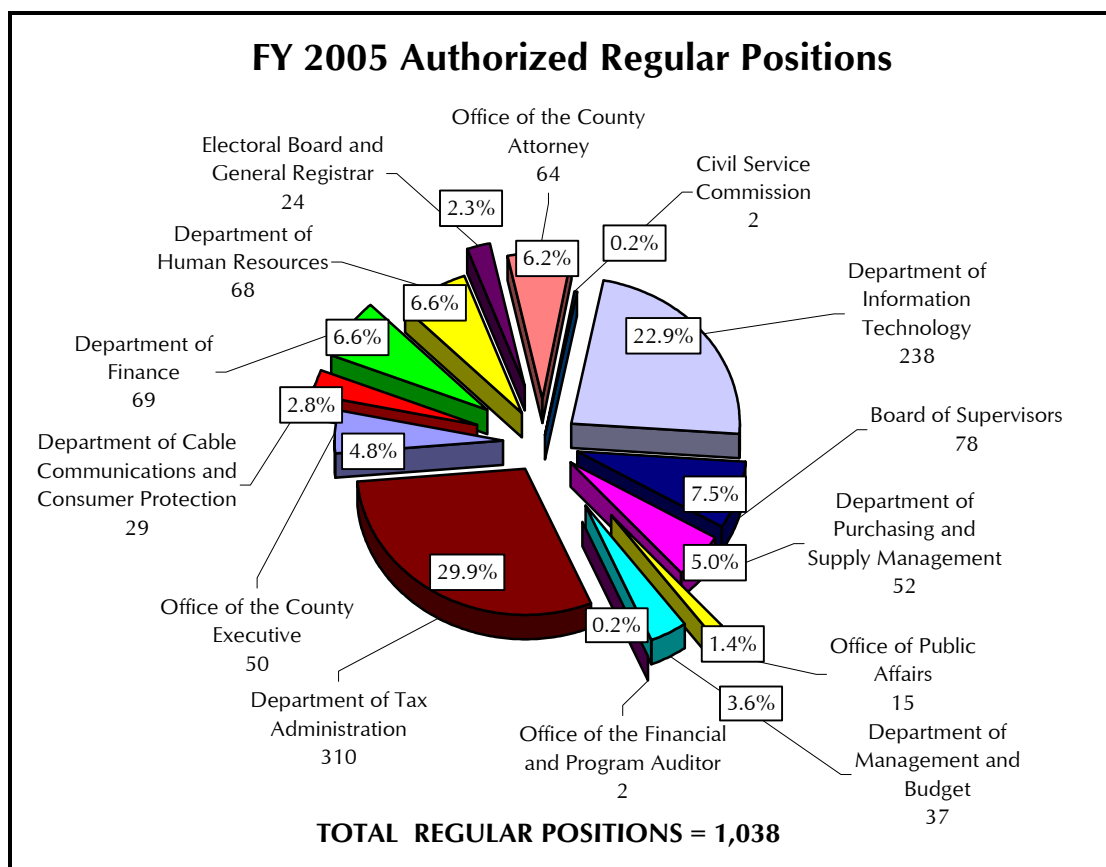
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## FY 2005 Expenditures and Positions by Agency



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## Benchmarking

Since 2000, Fairfax County has participated in the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) benchmarking effort. Over 130 cities and counties provide comparable data annually in 15 service areas. Not all jurisdictions provide data for every service area, however. The only one for which Fairfax County does not provide data is Roads and Highways because the Commonwealth maintains primary responsibility for that function for counties in Virginia. The agencies in this program area that provide data for benchmarking include the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Purchasing and Supply Management, and the Department of Information Technology. While not a comprehensive presentation of all agencies in this program area, the benchmarks shown provide a snapshot of how Fairfax County compares to others in these service areas. This should be viewed as a first step, with additional research to be undertaken in the future to determine if there are other means by which we can compare County performance more comprehensively for this program area. It should be noted that it is sometimes difficult to compare various administrative functions due to variation among local governments regarding structure and provision of service. It should also be noted that there are approximately 2,000 program-level performance indicators found throughout Volumes 1 and 2 for those seeking additional performance measurement data.

Participating local governments (cities, counties and towns) provide data on standard templates provided by ICMA in order to ensure consistency. ICMA then performs extensive checking and data cleaning to ensure the greatest accuracy and comparability of data. As a result of the time to collect the data and undergo ICMA's rigorous data cleaning processes, information is always available with a one-year delay. FY 2002 data represent the latest available information. The jurisdictions presented in the graphs on the following pages generally show how Fairfax County compares to other large jurisdictions (population over 500,000). In cases where other Virginia localities provided data, they are shown as well.

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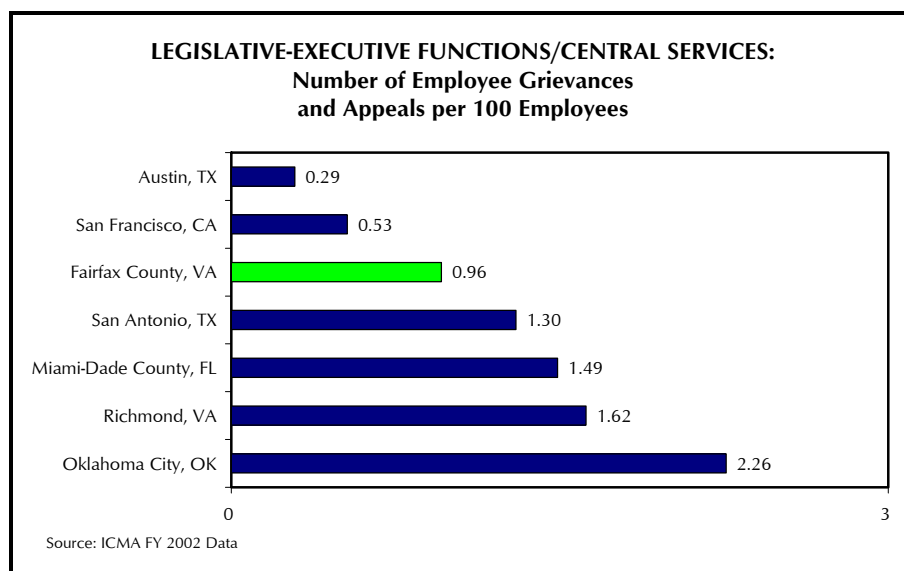
An important point to note in an effort such as this is that since participation is voluntary, the jurisdictions that provide data have demonstrated that they are committed to becoming/remaining high performance organizations. Therefore, comparisons made through this program should be considered in the context that the participants have self-selected and are inclined to be among the higher performers than a random sample among local governments nationwide. It is also important to note that not all jurisdictions respond to all questions. In some cases, the question or process is not applicable to a particular locality or data are not available. For those reasons, the universe of jurisdictions with which Fairfax County is compared is not always the same for each benchmark.

As shown on the graphs below, Fairfax County has a relatively low rate of grievances and appeals per 100 employees. This is due in large part to an Employee Relations program that seeks to resolve these types of issues before they escalate to formal grievances. The subsequent graph shows that Fairfax County's turnover rate is comparatively higher than other large and Virginia jurisdictions that responded to this question. This is largely due to the job market that the County faces including competition from the federal government, other local governments and the private sector for highly qualified employees.

The purchasing benchmarks indicate that Fairfax County ranks higher than most of the responding comparable jurisdictions on the use of procurement cards for purchasing activity. This helps reduce administrative costs and streamlines the process. Additionally, the County has a relatively low incidence of protests per \$25 million purchased. This is attributable to extensive staff training and program oversight.

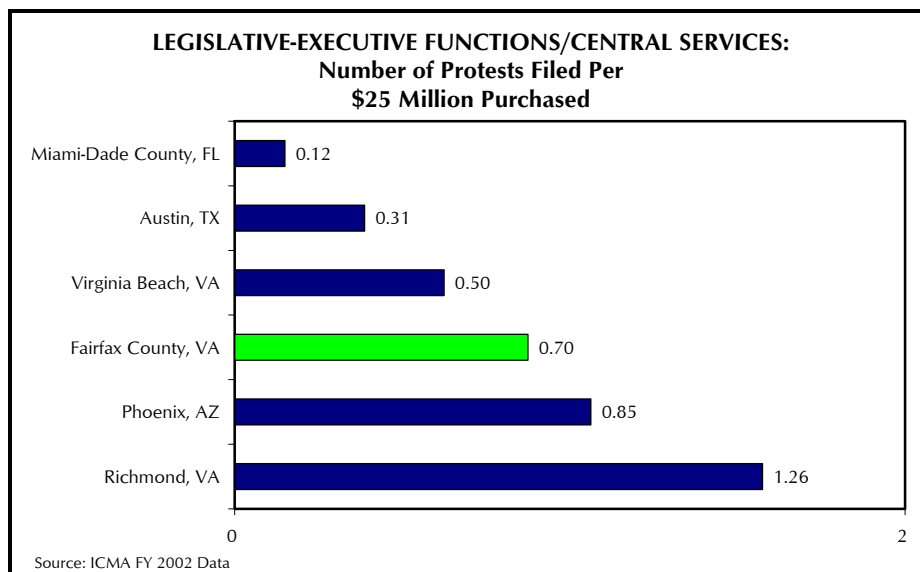
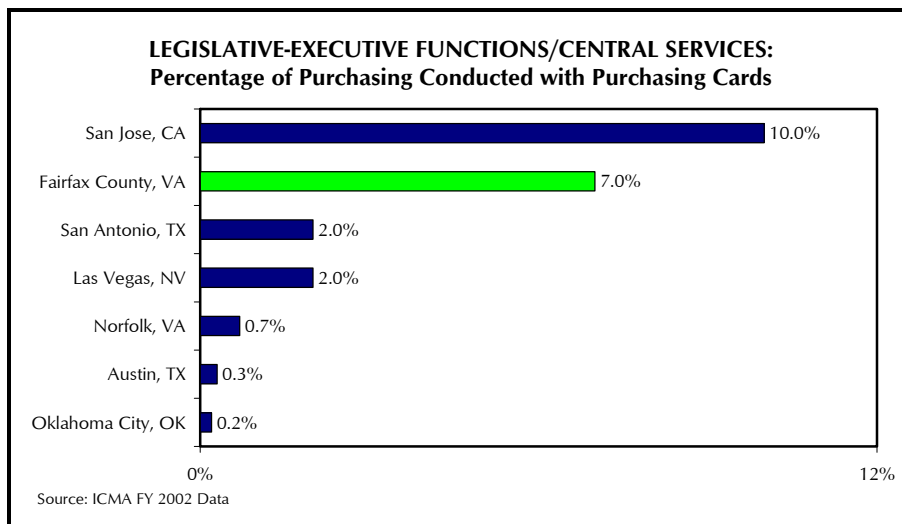
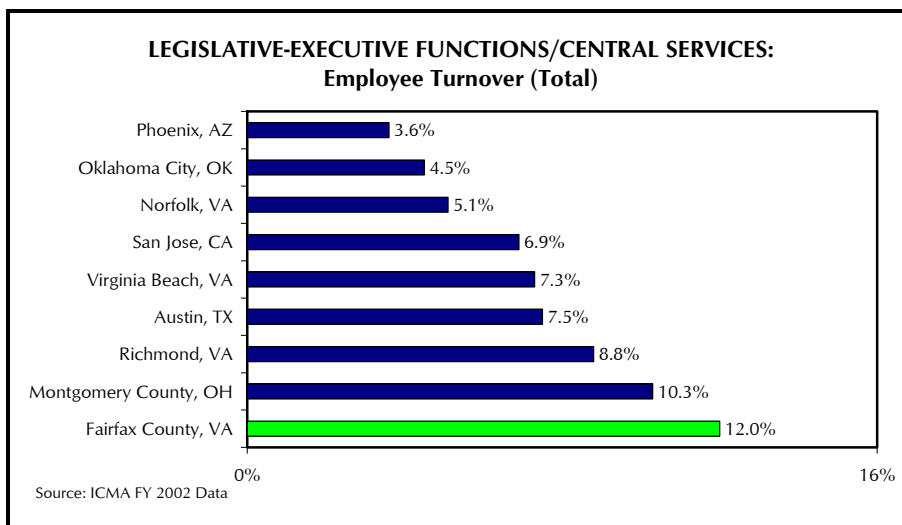
The last two benchmarks show network and telephone problem resolution/repair within 24 hours. In both cases, the County's performance reflects a high level of service quality.

Agencies use this ICMA benchmarking data in order to determine how County performance compares to other peer jurisdictions. Where other high performers are identified, the challenge is to learn what processes, systems or methods they use that contribute to their high level of performance. This is an ongoing process that is continually evolving and improving.





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